



# Region 8

April

2015

Outreach Division of School Improvement

## Effective Staffing Practices

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The focus of this article for this month is [Turnaround Principle 5 –Effective Staffing Practices](#). Turnaround Principles are not only used as a strategic system to support schools that may be struggling, but also as indicators for high performing schools. When discussing [Turnaround Principle 5](#)- effective staffing practices it is important for schools to develop and have systems in place for the following: Teacher recruitment of quality candidates, Evaluation practices that improve student learning, A professional development structure that supports continual improvement and professional growth and, Effective staff assignments to maximize student learning opportunities by accessing the staff's instructional strengths. All of the components cannot be viewed in isolation from one another but integrated, dependent practices that require the careful attention and planning for school leaders.

**Teacher Recruitment** It is important that schools consider strong candidates for vacancies they have and determine how they will find and recruit those candidates. Teachers for these positions must be selected through a rigorous and thorough screening process to ensure that they have the skills and characteristics of highly effective teachers. Schools or districts need to have a process to cast a wide net for recruitment efforts and not just traditional venues. The selection of staff should be a team effort that includes the administrative and leadership teams. This team collaborates in the selection process and is present at formal interviews and demonstration lessons. It is highly encouraged for schools to utilize demonstration lessons as a strategy to determine a candidate's instructional capacity in practice. This process may look very differently based on individual schools' needs, but schools that have implemented demo lessons have found great success in selecting quality candidates. During the selection process it is important to match prospective teachers to the position expectations and needs. If the candidate has teaching experience it would be sound practice to look at prior student learning outcomes, if possible, to determine a positive match.

**Teacher /Educator Evaluation** Systematic and frequent school-wide observations that include consistent staff feedback on agreed upon expectations and instructional practices are essential to maintaining a high quality staff. These are a way to support teachers and inform professional development efforts. Regular feedback to teachers from observations should focus on the instructional development of teachers, implementation of strategies, and alignment to school improvement goals. The goal of evaluation is not only accountability for student learning but also the basis for improving classroom practices, informing professional development, and increasing learning outcomes.

**Professional Development** Professional development planning must be intentional and not a random disconnected event. Effective professional development should be linked to teacher needs as evidenced by observations and walkthroughs as well as be connected to student learning data and school-wide goals. Walkthroughs as well as classroom observations and monitoring are conducted so that the instructional leader can ensure the practices are implemented and effective. Connecting PD to what teachers need, student learning data and outcomes, along with collaboration among teachers can transform into a professional learning community were everyone is learning together, sharing practices, and supporting one another.

**Staff Assignments** It is critical when assigning teachers that they have the right skills, competencies, and content knowledge to achieve student learning outcomes. Those teachers that provide interventions should have the necessary knowledge to effectively deliver and implement the interventions. Schools should have a plan and policy in place for staff that are considered not aligned to their position or unskilled and be placed on an improvement or support plan. Appropriate supports should be provided to the teacher based on needs and documentation of consistently underperforming staff should be kept to show progress made on improvements. There should also be a plan in place as well as a sense of urgency to dismiss those not making the necessary improvements.

The Outreach Division of School Improvement website has resources available to schools and districts in the area of effective staffing. These resources can be found [here](#). This article is available [here](#) in its entirety to access separate from this newsletter.

I am also here to support schools in this area as well as in other school improvement efforts. Please contact me if I can assist in anyway.

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### ESEA Flexibility Waiver

This allows Indiana to be exempt from certain aspects of the federal No Child Left Behind law. It also gives local schools flexibility in how they utilize federal funding and allow more of these decisions to be made at the local level. Indiana is process of applying for an extension of the waiver through the 2017-18 school year. The request was submitted on March 31, 2015. The details are located [here](#).

## Guide to 2015 End of Course Assessment Resources

Office of Student Assessment ECA Webpage: <http://www.doe.in.gov/assessment/end-course-assessments-ecas>

Please note: This is not a comprehensive list; there are additional resources posted on the ECA webpage. There are two sets of each resource unless otherwise noted: one for the Graduation component of the exam and one for the College- and Career- Ready (CCR) component.

**Blueprints** The purpose of the test blueprints, designed with the help of Indiana classroom teachers, is to make transparent to educators the knowledge, skills, and abilities required of students on the assessments.

The blueprints can be used as tools to:

- Align expectations regarding mastery of the standards;
- Identify the degree of emphasis of curricular components;
- Assist and guide in prioritizing curriculum and instructional planning; and
- Enhance classroom assessment.

⇒ English 10

- <http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/assessment/eng10gradexamblueprint.pdf> (Graduation)
- <http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/assessment/english-10-ecaaccountability-blueprintspring-2015.pdf> (CCR)

⇒ Algebra I

- <http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/assessment/algebraigradexamblueprint.pdf> (Graduation)
- <http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/assessment/algebra-i-ecaaccountability-blueprintspring-2015.pdf> (CCR)

⇒ Biology I

- <http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/assessment/biologyiblueprint.pdf>

**Instructional and Assessment Guidance** The purpose of these documents is to provide educators with instructional and assessment guidance. Informational videos accompany these documents. The videos also provide information about the Blueprints.

⇒ English 10

- <http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/assessment/eng-10-instructional-and-assessment-guidance2014-15.pdf> (Graduation)
- <http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/assessment/english-10-ecaaccountability-instructional-and-assessment-guidancespring-2015.pdf> (CCR)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z0F6DhI8dR0&feature=youtu.be> (Video Graduation & CCR)

⇒ Algebra I

- <http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/assessment/algebra-i-eca-instructional-and-assessment-guidance2014-15-v2.pdf> (Graduation)
- <http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/assessment/algebra-i-sp15-ccr-updates.pdf> (CCR)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A6of7NnLIXM&feature=youtu.be> (Video CCR)

⇒ Biology I

- <http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/assessment/biology-i-instructional-and-assessment-guidance-2014-2015.pdf>

**Item Samplers** The Item Samplers on this website provide information about ECAs for students, parents, educators, and others. The items in each sampler are examples of the types of items found on ECAs. These examples can serve as models when teachers are constructing items for classroom assessment. It should be noted that the samplers are not practice tests. Informational videos accompany the Item Samplers.

⇒ English 10

- <http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/assessment/english-10-eca-item-sampler-updated-oct-12.pdf> (Graduation)
- <http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/assessment/ccr-eng-10-sample-items.pdf> (CCR)
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uK\\_3OxfIKM&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uK_3OxfIKM&feature=youtu.be) (CCR Writing Prompt Video)

⇒ Algebra I

- <http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/assessment/algebraitemssamplermay2011-non-worddoc.pdf> (Graduation)
- CCR available in the Instructional & Assessment Guidance Section above

### **Released Items and Scoring Notes (Graduation Exam only)**

These documents include open-ended items from previous administrations of the ECAs, along with examples of actual student responses. Passages for the English 10 items are not available.

- ⇒ English 10- <http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/assessment/s14-eca-eng-10-scoring-notes.pdf>
- ⇒ Algebra I- <http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/assessment/alg-i-released-items-spring-2014.pdf>
- ⇒ Biology I- <http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/assessment/bio-eca-released-itemssp14with-lw-editsmwbk.pdf>

### **Additional Resources (direct links)**

- ⇒ [Accommodations and Tools for IN Statewide Testing for the 2014-15 School Year Webinar](#)
- ⇒ [Accommodations Resource Guide and Toolkit](#)
- ⇒ [ECA Testing Requirements Guidance](#)
- ⇒ [Experience College- and Career- Ready Assessment \(Includes answer keys, videos, and user guide\)](#)
- ⇒ [English 10 ECA Experience CCRA Video](#)
- ⇒ [Algebra I ECA Experience CCRA Video](#)

## Literacy in All Subject Areas

### A Shared Responsibility for Students' Literacy Development

Literacy skills are an important part of every academic discipline. However, each discipline relies on different types of texts, writing styles, and language to convey ideas and learning. For students to be fully prepared for the challenges and expectations of college and career, it is critical that they develop literacy skills in all content areas. As Indiana transitions to its new college and career ready standards, educators in all subject areas will be expected to incorporate content-specific literacy into their instruction.

#### **Background**

In April, 2014, the Indiana State Board of Education adopted the new college and career ready Indiana Academic Standards for English/Language Arts. Included with these standards are Content Area Literacy Standards for History/Social Studies and Science and Technical Subjects. These new standards establish a set of shared goals and expectations for what students should know and be able to do in grades PreK-12 in order to be on track for success in college and the workplace. For grades PreK-5, one comprehensive set of Standards covers reading, writing, speaking, listening, and media literacy across the entire curriculum, since most or all of the instruction in these grades comes from one teacher. For example, literacy standards are embedded in the Reading Standards for Nonfiction and Writing Standards. However, for grades 6-12, the Standards are divided into two sections, one for History/Social Studies and the other for Science and Technical Subjects. Dividing the 6-12 Standards this way ensures that students develop consistent literacy skills in many academic contexts and reflects the role English/Language Arts teachers and teachers in other content areas play in developing students' literacy abilities.



#### **Why Teach Literacy in All Subjects?**

Reading and writing do not take place solely in the English/Language Arts classroom. Literacy skills are critical across all content areas and each discipline utilizes specialized texts, writing styles, and language to analyze and communicate ideas and concepts. The literacy skills needed to research and evaluate primary and secondary sources in a History/Social Studies class are very different from those needed to decipher elaborate diagrams and data presented in a Science or Technical Studies class. Students must develop the skills to comprehend complex informational texts, engage in purposeful writing, and communicate effectively within all content areas. These literacy practices will not only deepen students' content knowledge, but also prepare them for the challenging reading, writing, and research that will be required in college and the workplace.

#### **What Does This Mean for Teachers?**

Because each discipline has its own unique approach to literacy, content teachers are in the best position to teach the literacy skills employed in their field. With the implementation of the new Indiana Academic Standards, teachers will use their content area expertise to help students meet the particular challenges of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language in their respective disciplines. Content teachers are not being asked to become reading and writing specialists and English teachers will continue to teach their students literature as well as literary non-fiction. Rather, all educators will teach discipline-specific literacy skills as tools to help students better understand the content.

#### **Next Steps**

Teachers should read through the Content Area Literacy Standards assigned to their specific content area. As you become familiar with these standards, make connections, where possible, with the curriculum, standards, and resources you are currently using. Finally, look for ways to implement the Content Area Literacy Standards into lessons you already teach.

Source: Maryland Classroom; Vol. 17, No. 2

## Guidance for Lost Instructional Minutes Due to Weather

Recently the Department sought your feedback regarding instructional minutes lost thus far this school year due to winter weather. Your feedback was prompt and incredibly helpful in determining the attached guidance. Please note to take advantage of waiver options outlined in the memo to make up instructional minutes. Your corporation application is due no later than June 30, 2015 to the IDOE at <http://www.doe.in.gov/accreditation>.

- [Lost Instructional Time 2014-2015 Memo](#)
  - [Request for Conditional Waiver of Penalty for Loss of Instructional Day](#)
- Last year, there were numerous questions from schools that already exceeded the required 300 minutes for elementary grades 1-6 and 360 minutes for secondary school grades 7-12. It is important to know that you must ADD time to the existing day to makeup previously lost days.

Questions regarding the addition of time can be directed to [Sarah Frantz](#) or [George Frampton](#) in Accreditation.

Questions regarding E-Learning can be directed to [Candice Dodson](#) in E-Learning.



## 2015 Summer of eLearning Schedule

The summer of eLearning Conferences have been scheduled. There are 24 locations this year, these conferences offer great learning opportunities, whether you are looking to improve your instructional practice or your leadership style. Now is the time to reserve a spot for the latest in digital learning. Visit the Summer of eLearning page for more information: <http://www.doe.in.gov/elearning/2015-summer-elearning>



There are a few being hosted within our region.

Dates	Name	Conference Location	Keynote(s)
June 10 & 11	<a href="#">WISE 15</a>	Northfield Jr/Sr High	Dr. Michael Wesch, Kristin Ziemke, Kim Campbell, & Michael Gorman
July 21	<a href="#">IntegatED</a>	East Noble High School	Dave Burgess
July 27 & 28	<a href="#">e3 Tech Conference</a>	Warsaw Community High School	Todd Nesloney and Shannon McClintock Miller

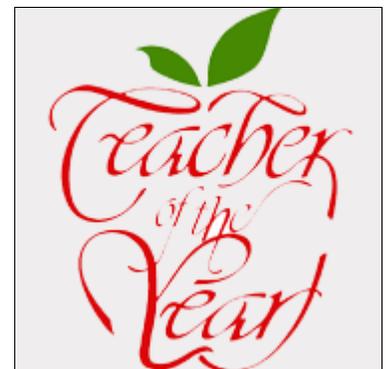
## Requesting Talent Pool Recommendations

The State of Indiana maintains a file of emerging classroom leaders that consists of a cadre of distinguished teachers and principals. Your recommendations will identify educators who will be of great value to your community and state and who may also ultimately receive prestigious recognition for their contributions and achievements. For further information read attached [memorandum](#) and [Talent Pool Recommendation Form](#) Nominations are due by May 8, 2015.

## The Indiana Teacher of the Year Program (INTOY)

The Indiana Teacher of the Year Program ([INTOY](#)) is excited to announce the 2015 Teacher of the Year Application. Applications are due July 9, 2014. Please review the [INTOY Application Packet](#) and the [INTOY Program Information](#) documents for further information. The application will also be available on our Indiana Teacher of the Year website <http://www.doe.in.gov/toy>. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Teacher of the Year Coordinator, Sarah Pies, at [spies@doe.in.gov](mailto:spies@doe.in.gov).

I hope that you will consider nominating a teacher from your district. It would be great to have a strong representation from this region.



## Follow the Reader— Big Goal Collaborative Third Grade Reading Team



Big Goal Collaborative's 3rd Grade Reading Team has developed a tool for increasing our region's literacy. Based on Project READS' curricula to train mentors and parents, Follow the Reader is a highly engaging, highly interactive series of 5 online programs. This Northeast Indiana Original is now available FREE to mentors, tutors, childcare providers, parents, and anyone else within the 10-county region of Northeast Indiana represented by the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership and the Big Goal Collaborative. The online programs can be accessed through the Project READS website:

<http://abouteducation.org/>

## Indiana Association for Child Care Resource and Referral

Indiana Association for Child Care Resource and Referral (IACCRR) announces **The Child Care Search** button, a free service that directs users to [www.childcareindiana.org](http://www.childcareindiana.org) and allows your school to partner with the Indiana Association for Child Care Resource and Referral (IACCRR) and local Child Care Resource and Referral agencies to help families find high quality child care and out-of-school time options. **Adding the Child Care Search button to your school website is easy and FREE!** For more information, visit [www.iaccrr.org](http://www.iaccrr.org) and click on 'Link to Us'. For questions, contact the Indiana Association for Child Care Resource and Referral at [datahelp@iaccrr.org](mailto:datahelp@iaccrr.org).



## Monthly Classroom Toolbox Tip #2

If you are a master teacher, new teacher, or an educator who is constantly working to develop your strengths and refresh your toolbox, reviewing the 49 techniques in Doug Lemov's book **Teach Like a Champion** and the core ideas from Paul Bambrick-Santoyo's book **Leverage Leadership** are great places to begin.

### Classroom Management Levers

#### Technique 42: **No Warnings**

Warnings are the quickest way to lowering classroom expectations.

Keep expectations high by doing the following:

- Intervene early (*proactively remind them with what to do*)
- Be reliable, predictable and consistent (*give consequences right when needed*)
- Make consequences proportionate to the misbehavior keeping incentives in play (*Ask yourself how effective is your system with fostering and maintaining positive behaviors.*)
- Remain calm, poised and impersonal (*avoid sarcasm and condescending remarks*)
- Address the behavior privately when possible (*and publicly if necessary- students need to know that everyone will be held accountable*)

Remember, a reminder is different than a warning. Be relentless in framing positive expectations!

### Instructional Levers

**Core Idea:** Effective instruction is not about whether we taught it. It's about whether the students learned it.

*Are you having the right conversations in your PLCs, data conferences, etc.? The conversations that lead to results...Successful data-driven instruction depends on these four key fundamental areas.*

1. **Assessment:** What is the roadmap to rigor? What do the students need to master? Have you defined how to assess the standards? What do I need to teach for my students to be able to master the questions on the assessment
2. **Analysis:** Do you have more than a "scoreboard"? Where are the students struggling and why? Standard by standard, what are you noticing about your student's performance?
3. **Action:** Did the students learn it? What new teaching plans will be implemented to respond to this analysis? How can we teach it so that they learn it?
4. **Systems:** What systems and procedures will ensure continual data-driven improvement? Is the assessment cycle prioritized on your calendar?

Remember, assessments are the roadmaps to rigor! Effective data analysis tells you if you are following the path.

## ASCD FREE, On-Demand Webinars

**ASCD's free webinar series** brings experts in the field of education to a computer near you with practical, ready-to-use strategies and advice. We archive each webinar so that you can get your professional development on demand! Check out these recent webinars or [browse the complete webinar archive](#).



## Assessment Calendar and Updates 2014-2015

March 1– April 30– ISTAR (Science and Social Studies)

March 30– May 29 6– National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Grades 4, 8, & 12–  
Paper/Pencil Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)

March 30– May 15– NCSC Assessment (English/Language Arts and Mathematics)

April 20– June 3– ECAs (Spring)

April 20– May 8– ISTEP+ Part 2– Paper/pencil (Pre-approval required) (Multiple-Choice & Technology-Enhanced Items)

April 23– May 15– ISTEP+ Part 2– Online (Multiple-Choice & Technology-Enhanced Items)

June 1– July 24– IREAD3 (Summer)- Online

June 8- July 24– IREAD3 (Summer) Paper/pencil (as needed)

June 18– July 30– ECAs (Summer)

## Outreach Division of School Improvement

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**Doug Thieme**  
Outreach Coordinator

IMAGINING THE POSSIBILITIES. MAKING THEM HAPPEN.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if I can support your work in any way at the district and school level. I am here to assist in any way.

Please pass this newsletter on to your principals, teachers, and other school/district personnel that would benefit from the information it provides. All of my previous newsletters are now archived on my regional website. The link can be found to the left. I will also be adding more resources in time.

I am continually adding individuals that would like to be added to the newsletter email so that they can receive it directly. If you are one of those individuals please email me to request that your name is added to the list of recipients.

The following remaining two pages contain Professional Development opportunities that are being offered by the Region 8 Education Service Center. PLEASE visit to see the QUALITY sessions that they are providing. They are always looking to add to their agenda and PD calendar. Please let them know of the needs of your district and school.

The last page contains resources that your principals and teachers might find beneficial to improving instruction and their lessons. Please take a look. If you find resources that are useful that schools would find beneficial please let me know.

# Professional Development Opportunities and Resources

## Region 8 Education Service Center PD Opportunities

### Advancing Differentiation K-12 Rescheduled for June 10, 2015

Join consultant Sandy Adams for her *The Advancing Differentiation K-12* workshop on June 10, 2015. This workshop is 80% practical application/20% theory. Teachers will leave with materials needed to “ramp up” their current differentiation efforts in the classroom. To register click [here](#).

### CPR/AED Classes Offered for Teacher Licensing

For educators seeking CPR/AED training for recertification, classes are offered at CORE. Classes run on selected Saturdays from 10:00am-12:00pm on May 16, June 20, and July 11 at CORE (1726 St. Joe River Dr. Ft. Wayne, IN 46805). The cost is only \$50. Participants need only to register for one class. Participants can register by emailing [julie.coreinc@yahoo.com](mailto:julie.coreinc@yahoo.com). Districts can also work with CORE to schedule personalized sessions for groups of educators. Regular store hours are 11am-7pm Tues-Fri and Sat 10am-6pm.

For teachers seeking their first license in need of Suicide Prevention training, the IDOE offers several options including a free resource that includes a certificate through [SPTS University](#).

### June 2015: Connecting Reading Instruction to Content: Grades 2-8

Consultant Michele Luck will be at Region 8 on June 16, 2015, for a session on *Connecting Reading Instruction to Content: Grades 2-8*. Participants will look at methods for building background knowledge and content-related vocabulary, engage in activities to help students make meaning of difficult texts, and practice strategies for accountable talk and collaboration. To register click [here](#).

### High Ability Language Arts Curriculum Workshop: June 25, 2015

Region 8 ESC will once again host the *High Ability Language Arts Curriculum Workshop* for K-8 teachers in conjunction with the IDOE on June 25, 2015. This is a repeat of the training done last summer. Teachers will participate in a series of activities designed to learn the critical and creative thinking models incorporated within the units. Presenters include Ginny Berry, Kristie Spears, Monica Plantan, Doris Fulwider, and Amy Marshand. The cost is \$15.00 and teachers should register by clicking [here](#).

### Math PBL with the New Indiana CCR Math Standards 6-12: Rescheduled for June 29-30, 2015

Teachers in grades 6-12 with some PBL experience are invited to join Al Summers on June 29-30, 2015, for the rescheduled two-day session to develop a fully designed PBL math project based on the 2014 Indiana CCR Math Standards. Projects will focus on real world problems and making real world connections. To register click [here](#).

### Texas Instruments Workshops Coming in June 2015

Region 8 will host two Texas Instruments Professional Learning workshops in June. High school algebra, geometry, and statistics teachers will spend June 22, 2015, exploring the five Content Domains for high school mathematics when they attend Exploring IAS Topics in High School Math with the TI-84 Plus Family. On **June 25, 2015**, high school math teachers who are just beginning to use TI-NSPIRE Apps for the iPad can attend the Getting Started with TI-NSpire Apps for iPad in High School Math session. To register click [here](#).

### Summer 2015: DOK and Formative Assessments

National consultant and author Nicole Vagle returns to Region 8 on June 23, 2015 (Grades K-5) and **June 24, 2015** (Grades 6-12) to work with teachers on *Using Depth of Knowledge to Develop Quality Formative Assessments*. Teachers will explore how to write quality and rigorous formative assessments and rubrics aligned to DOK levels 1-4. In addition, participants will receive a copy for her book *Design in 5: Essential Phases to Create Engaging Assessment Practices*. To register click [here](#).

# Professional Development Opportunities and Resources

## Resources

### **Differentiated Instruction Resources**

<http://differentiationcentral.com>

<http://www.differentiatedresources.com/>

<http://www.ericdigests.org/1996-3/mixed.htm>

<http://www.readwritethink.org/professional-development/strategy-guides/differentiating-reading-experience-students-30103.html#strategy-practice>

### **Guided Math Instruction:**

<http://www.illustrativemathematics.org/>

<http://www.k-5mathteachingresources.com/>

[www.insidemathematics.org](http://www.insidemathematics.org)

[www.learnzillion.com](http://www.learnzillion.com) – for both math and ELA

### **Content Literacy for College and Career Readiness:**

<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/blueprint/faq/college-career.pdf>

<http://www.doe.in.gov/achievement/ccr>

[http://www.wested.org/area\\_of\\_work/college-career/](http://www.wested.org/area_of_work/college-career/)

<http://www.readworks.org/>

The National Education Association recently posted 3,000 online lessons, representing the work of more than 100 "master teachers" who translated the College and Career Ready math and language arts standards into classroom activities for every grade. The instructors share classroom videos, samples of student work and candid evaluations of resources they've tested. The project, a joint venture with ed-tech startup BetterLessons, is funded by the NEA and the Gates Foundation. Organizers hope to have 16,000 model lessons posted by the fall of 2015.

<http://cc.betterlesson.com/>

### **Scaffolding Lesson Strategies:**

<http://www.edutopia.org/blog/scaffolding-lessons-six-strategies-rebecca-alber>

### **Literacy Resources:**

#### **Reading Resources Network**

This teacher site by Scholastic has a wealth of information about how to support students to become better readers. The emphasis is on early elementary. The subsection Strategies for Building Success in Your Classroom is the most important for the social studies teacher with its emphasis on nonfiction, classroom libraries, and guided reading.

#### **Graphic Organizers for Reading**

This set of thirty graphic organizers has suggested applications to analyzing, brainstorming, comparing, evaluating, hypothesizing, interacting sequencing and visualizing information.

#### **Content Area Literacy**

Here are fourteen strategies for teaching students to improve their reading of history-social science material. Each has an indication of when in the lesson the strategy is appropriate and instructions for applying it in the classroom.

#### **Using Readers Theatre**

Readers Theatre is a presentation of text that is expressively and dramatically read aloud by two or more readers. Although there may be some staging or costumes, the emphasis is on reading! English Learners benefit immeasurably because they have the opportunity to practice a text several times as they prepare a performance.

#### **Exploring How Section Headings Support Understanding of Expository Texts**

This lesson supports third- through fifth-grade students' exploration and understanding of the purposes for section headings in expository texts. Resources are provided for the teacher to select texts that are appropriate to the students' reading level, interests, and curriculum. The lesson requires students to work together to explore their understanding of section headings and solve problems presented to them. For extension activities, students can write their own expository text using three to five section headings and apply the strategy to the outline format.

#### **Choosing, Chatting, and Collecting: Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy**

The vocabulary self-collection strategy involves having students choose the words they want to learn, chat about their rationale for selecting words, and agree upon words for a classroom collection. This strategy is an effective approach to helping students understand the meanings of new words, use them in conversations and writing, and make personal connections with words while reading. The strategy also encourages students to use the words for authentic tasks and on a regular basis in their writing. In this lesson, an online Shakespeare text is used as an example. The strategy can be applied to any content area reading.

#### **Building Reading Comprehension Through Think-Alouds**

Studies have shown that the think-aloud strategy improves reading comprehension on tests. Through this lesson, the teacher will model the think-aloud strategy for students. Components of think-alouds will be introduced, as well as type of text interactions. Students will develop the ability to use think-alouds to aid in reading comprehension tasks.

#### **Literacy and Learning: Content Literacy Strategies**

Here are over 32 strategies for improving comprehension that can be applied to history-social science content reading. Each strategy is described on a separate, downloadable pdf page

#### **Reading Strategies for the Social Studies Classroom**

This Holt, Reinhart and Winston site offers U.S. and World History examples of 10 reading strategies by Judith Irvin. They include previewing text, understanding text, graphic organizers, visualizing, building background knowledge, constructing concepts, making predictions, activating prior knowledge, anticipating information, and developing vocabulary.

#### **Be a Reading Detective: Finding Similarities and Differences in Ideas**

This lesson provides a compare and contrast strategy technique for nonfiction writing. First, students are introduced to the terms compare and contrast, and asked to find similarities and differences between two common items. Next, students reference an article practice evaluating text by comparing and contrasting. A Reader's Tool Kit handout guides students to identify ways in which an author relates ideas and relationships. Students are then introduced to Venn diagrams as tools that demonstrate similarities and differences. To show that they understand compare and contrast, students independently apply the techniques they learned to curriculum-based materials and present their findings to the class.

#### **An Exploration of Text Sets: Supporting All Readers**

The lesson supports readers of a range of abilities and experience through the use of text sets. A text set is a collection that focuses on one concept or topic and includes multiple genres such as books, charts and maps, informational pamphlets, poetry and songs, photographs, non-fiction books, almanacs or encyclopedias. In this lesson, the class community will put together a collection of text sets on topics of keen interest. They will then explore these texts using three key reading strategies: (1) graffiti boards, (2) browsing for key information, and (3) uninterrupted reading/focused free writing.

#### **Acquiring New Vocabulary Through Book Discussion Groups**

This lesson explores various ways in which to foster students' vocabulary skills through direct instruction and small-group discussions. While reading the text *Pink and Say* by Patricia Polacco, students identify words that are unfamiliar to them. Working collaboratively in small groups, they discuss the meaning of these new words using context clues from the text, prior knowledge, and print and online resources. They then apply their knowledge of the new vocabulary to further their understanding of the text. This particular lesson can be modified and reused for other areas of the curriculum, with moderate preparation and researching of topic-related resources.

Extensions are included to further expand vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension.